

The alumni clubs of The Fund for American Studies, gathered at the 2nd HAKFAS Annual International Conference in Opatija, Croatia, represented by the young professionals – in their late 20s and 30s – from different sectors (business, government, academia, nonprofit), who have demonstrated a record of professional achievement, leadership qualities, ethical and proactive conduct, coming from 22 countries of the regions of Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Caucasus, namely: LATVIA, POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, SLOVENIA, CROATIA, SERBIA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO, MACEDONIA, ALBANIA, GREECE, ROMANIA, BULGARIA, TURKEY, SYRIA, LEBANON, ISRAEL, JORDAN, EGYPT, and GEORGIA

URGING the advancement of Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Caucasus as active players on the international scene, recognized for its engaged and internationally minded citizens,

DETERMINED to creatively build themselves into the time and location in which they live, to develop finest tools and skills for effective leadership, become inspired and inspire others,

WELCOMING the entrepreneurial spirit,

MINDFUL of the importance of the development of exceptional young professionals into active players on the local and regional scene by guiding them and keeping them connected,

AWARE of the importance of promoting the programs, activities and values of The Fund for American Studies and Georgetown University, namely the values of freedom, democracy and free-market economy in contemporary world, as well as the will of young professionals of the region to cooperate in promoting these values,

ADOPTED

OPATIJA DECLARATION

ON COOPERATION BETWEEN TFAS ALUMNI CLUBS FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE CAUCASUS

TITLE I

BASIC PROVISIONS

Article 1

This declaration establishes cooperation between TFAS alumni clubs from the region. The cooperation includes common coordinated activities on realisation of joint projects.

TITLE II

FOUR ANNUAL ALUMNI FORUMS

Article 1

The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) assembles exceptional individuals of the highest capacity.

They participate in the intense academic and cross-cultural program(s) – they collaborate, they share experience and they help each other to grow as persons.

Once the program is over, the alumni clubs need to prevent those positive impacts from fading away.

Article 2

The objective of the alumni clubs of TFAS is to continue developing exceptional young professionals into active players on the local and regional scene by guiding them and keeping them strongly connected.

Some of the alumni became leading academicians, NGO leaders and media experts, whilst many of them became CEOs, board members and decision makers.

TFAS alumni clubs want to keep connected more than 3,000 young professionals who are ambitious and active citizens, and in this regard aim to organize four alumni forums yearly: Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer.

Forums are to be held in a form of four alumni conferences, each to be held in different location in the region, and following the model established by the Croatian Alumni Club.

Two locations are fixed: Fall Forum in Dubrovnik (Croatia) and Summer Forum in Prague (Czech Republic).

Two locations are rotating: Winter Forum and Spring Forum.

Forum in Dubrovnik would be organized by the Croatian Alumni Club.

Forum in Prague would be organized by the Czech Alumni Club and TFAS on the last weekend of the AIPES Institute when 140 participants would join the alumni during the extra curriculum activities of the forum.

Four initial clubs to host the first four forums will be determined during the Opatija Conference and will sign a special one-page Memorandum of Understanding.

Article 3

The Clubs want the alumni to stay connected, build their future and change their local “world”.

Article 4

The Clubs shall set themselves the following objectives with each of the Four Annual Alumni Forums project:

- Top lecturers and stimulating topics
- Hand-picked participants assuring inspirational event
- First-class networking
- Opportunity to enhance regional contacts every year
- Exchange of participants’ experience and know-how

- Promoting alumni philosophy; connecting people based on merit – not on family connections or material interest
- Serve as an example to other TFAS chapters in the region, and provide them with help and know-how, with the ultimate goal of establishing new, or activating existing clubs in the region.

Article 5

The Clubs see the Four Annual Alumni Forums as a chance to initiate a spin of activities around TFAS alumni community consisting of 9,000 alumni worldwide, of which 3,000 are from the region.

Once this spin takes hold, various additional activities and mutual interaction among alumni might likely to be expected.

Subsequently, the alumni clubs' vision to develop exceptional young professionals into active players on the local and regional scene by guiding them and keeping them connected will become an iterative and self-sustainable process.

Article 6

The Clubs strongly believe that human factor is essential in their continuous efforts to create a better community – a good society.

The Clubs wish to motivate the alumni to have a strong impact on their local communities as the initiators of positive changes.

By encouraging continuing education, personal development and interpersonal cooperation, the Four Annual Alumni Forums initiative encourages citizen engagement.

The initiative fastens a valuable network of young intellectuals actively practicing their citizenship.

Active citizenship means active engagement in government affairs, brainstorming intelligent solutions for current issues, initiative on reforms, and close civic monitoring of the reform agendas' execution.

Article 7

The Four Annual Alumni Forums initiative is regional in its very core, character and implementation.

The project itself is a first-class regional networking project which connects the alumni clubs' leadership four times a year on the basis of merit with a purpose of creating a well connected group of educated people with a vision to create a good society.

It is all about establishing regional networks, sharing regional best-practices, and enhancing regional cooperation.

It is also a role model initiative for young professionals from 22 participatory countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Caucasus.

Recruited on the basis of work experience, managerial skills and entrepreneurial personality, each participant is a prospective initiator of a similar project in his or her own country.

TITLE III

TFAS BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND DONORS MEETING

Article 1

TFAS has started its praiseworthy programs in 1967, and has recently celebrated its 40th anniversary.

The alumni community has in the past 15 years, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the launch of the Prague and Greece institutes, grown from an American to a global network in which the Eurasian and Mediterranean alumni have a major share.

Article 2

The Clubs call upon TFAS leadership to recognize the increased importance of the European and Mediterranean alumni by, for the first time, organizing one of its two annual meetings of the Board of Trustees and donors in this part of the world.

The suggested location is Dubrovnik, Croatia.

The city of freedom and tradition, both Central European and Mediterranean, Dubrovnik encompasses strong symbolics as the ancient Dubrovnik Republic was the first country that in the 18th century diplomatically recognized the newly founded United States of America.

The Croatian Alumni Club is willing to organize and host such an event, with the support and advice of TFAS.

Article 3

The meeting of the TFAS Board of Trustees and donors would be held simultaneously with the 3rd HAKFAS Annual International Conference, i.e. the Fall Forum as described in Title II, Article 2.

Socializing of the TFAS trustees and donors with the TFAS alumni of outstanding leadership will serve to demonstrate to the trustees and donors how the TFAS education has bare fruit and gone from theory into practice, i.e. contributed to creating a good society, answering in practice the question what does it mean to teach freedom.

TITLE IV

COORDINATION

Article 1

The fulfilment of the goals enumerated in this Declaration is the responsibility of each and every alumni club individually, as specified in the Declaration's text.

Article 2

The alumni clubs will share their organizational know how and experience, help each other, and stay open for coordinated activities.

TITLE VI

THE FUND FOR AMERICAN STUDIES*Article 1*

The alumni clubs commend the work that TFAS has done on keeping the alumni connected, as well as the work that alumni have contributed back to TFAS.

Article 2

The Clubs call upon TFAS to express its support for the Opatija Declaration, especially the goals set in Titles II and III, namely Four Annual Alumni Forums initiative and the Board of Trustees and donors meeting in Dubrovnik.

Article 3

The Clubs call upon TFAS to help the alumni stay connected with one another and with TFAS. The Clubs want to encourage TFAS to systematize and expand its work with the alumni in all adequate ways, including support for the chapters that host professional, cultural and/or social events such as the Four Annual Alumni Forums initiative presented in the Opatija Declaration.

TITLE V

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS*Article 1*

This Declaration is an open and working document. It calls upon other TFAS alumni clubs from the region to join in comments and suggestions.

Article 2

The Declaration will be made public by the Clubs in all adequate forms of media.

Article 3

Representatives of the alumni clubs have read, understood, and by voting unanimously adopted the Declaration.

Opatija, 18 November 2007.